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ABSTRACT

The guide outlines the design and content of Hebrew language schools (ulpanim) for immigrants in Israel. In addition to teaching the fundamentals of the Hebrew language, these schools introduce immigrants to the basic values of Judaism, the Jewish people, and the land of Israel. Introductory sections offer a brief history of ulpanim since 1949 and an overview of their objectives. Some basic methodological principles are outlined, including emphasis on cultural context, student needs, linguistic progression, unit of study, and emphasis on skills and application. Seven forms in which instruction is provided are described: primary; study in the kibbutzim; short courses; advanced courses; Hebrew for specific purposes (civil servants, vocational/professional language use, retraining of college-educated immigrants, Hebrew for conversion); work schools for young people without families; and programs operating in workplaces. A final section lists the sources of referrals to ulpanim, when necessary. (MSE)

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Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport
Division of Adult Education, Hebrew Language Department

THE ULP N FOR HEBREW LANGUAGE INSTRUC ION

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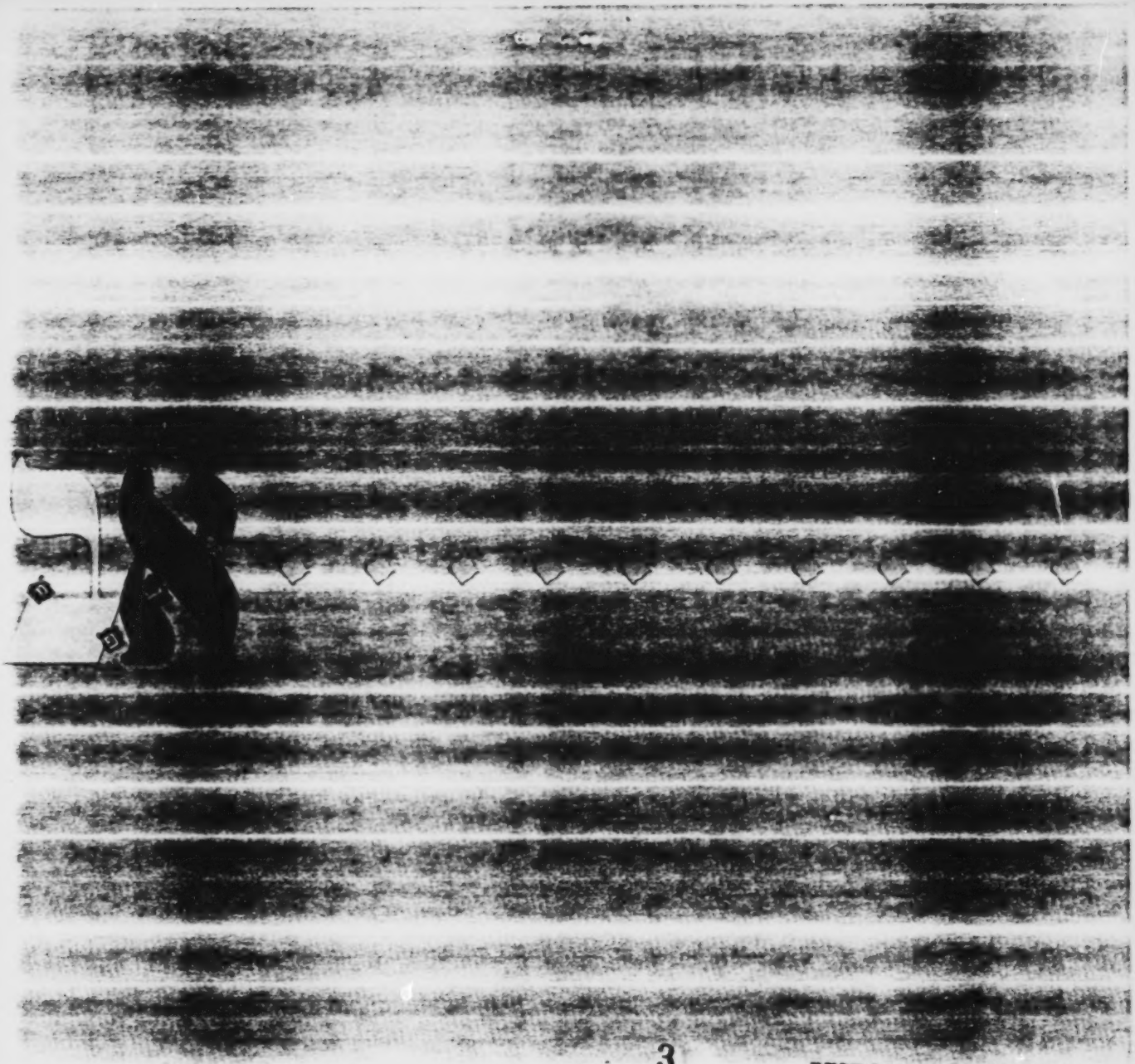

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Ministry of Education,
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Division of Adult Education
Hebrew Language Department

THE UL[illegible]EBREW LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

JERUSALEM, 1994
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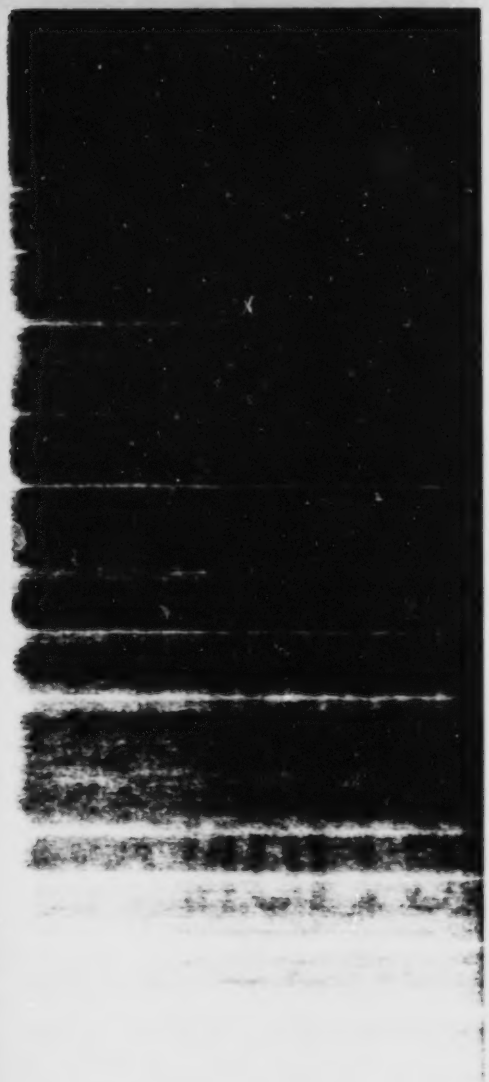

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A. History of the Ulpan

The revival of the Hebrew language as the language of speech and daily life is one of the cornerstones of the national renaissance of the Jewish people in our times. During the many centuries that the Jews lived in the Diaspora, Hebrew was not a living language, a spoken language. The Jews in the Diaspora spoke the vernacular of the country in which they lived. Hebrew was not dead, but was used mostly as the language of prayer and religious writings. In the 1880s, a miraculous thing happened - Hebrew was reborn and once again became a living language. It was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) who revitalized and promoted spoken Hebrew. He argued that there could be no national renaissance without the revival of Hebrew and that Hebrew should be the language spoken in daily life. The language taught in the ulpan is modern Hebrew, the language of daily life - the language used in newspapers, and the language heard at work, on the street, on the radio, and on television.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, many professionals began to immigrate to Israel. Knowledge of Hebrew was a prerequisite for

their professional and socio-cultural absorption. The Ministry of Education and Culture, in conjunction with the Jewish Agency, opened Hebrew language ulpanim all over Israel. The first, Ulpan Etzion, opened in Jerusalem in 1949. The ulpan was unique in that the students lived at the school and did not have to support themselves during the period of their studies. The classes at the ulpan were highly intensive.

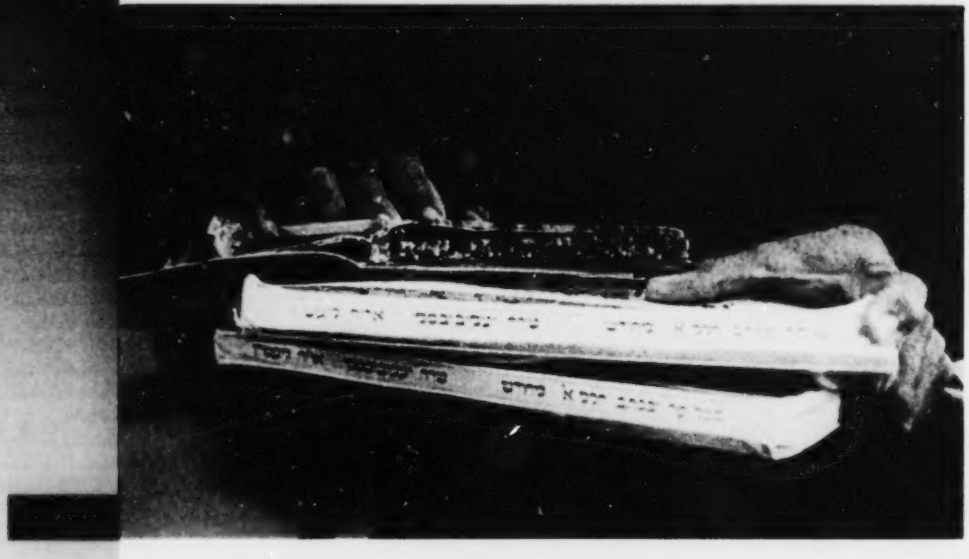
Ulpan Etzion was the model for the ulpanim that were later established throughout Israel, including those set up on kibbutzim.

Ulpan Meir, Tel Aviv 1951

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF), facing a pressing need to teach the fundamentals of Hebrew to new immigrant soldiers, also opened intensive courses, which operated even at the height of battle.

B. Objectives of the Ulpan

The ulpan is designed to help alleviate the "immigration pains" of new immigrants. The immigrants' social and cultural background, both general and Jewish, is extremely varied. Most immigrants to Israel are not fluent in Hebrew, are not versed in the basic concepts of Judaism, and know very little about the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. Therefore, in addition to teaching the fundamentals of the Hebrew language, the ulpan introduces the immigrants to the basic values of Judaism, the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.



The Hebrew language is the key to familiarity with what is happening in Israeli society and the gate to understanding its most significant problems. By reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, and watching television, the immigrant learns about the matters that affect social life in Israel. The ulpan also imparts cultural values by hosting cultural and social activities, such as trips and tours, holiday parties, and cultural events. In this way, the ulpan helps to accelerate the process of becoming a citizen and facilitates the immigrant's integration into the Israeli social and cultural life.

C. Some Methodological Principles

A. The ulpan is unique in its emphasis on imparting language in its cultural context, not merely teaching it. Hebrew is presented as part of the religious-cultural-social and historical complex, in an effort to impress upon the students that the Hebrew language is their "heritage." Creating a sense of "heritage" is only feasible if Judaism, the Jewish people, and the Land of Israel are a regular and integral feature of the educational program.

B. The starting point of the ulpan is the needs of the students. Their needs are defined not only as their ability to function in daily life, but also as their ability for self-expression and their command of linguistic skills. The objective is that the students will be completely absorbed linguistically; in other words, they will feel the same sense of involvement and belonging as do all citizens of Israel.

C. The linguistic hierarchy is arranged in a progression from more to less useful rather than from easy to difficult (in the first stage of studies).

D. The study unit is not based on a word or a sentence, but on discourse, i.e.

vocabulary, idioms, expressions, and speech, which enable natural discourse in both the cognitive and the affective spheres.

E. Emphasis is placed not on "knowledge" but on skills. Rather than focusing on one skill, the program stresses the integration of skills (speech, writing, reading, listening and watching), which paves the way for natural and essential discourse. Naturally, primarily in the first stage of studies, speech (for mastery of self-expression) is an important part of the educational activity.

F. Application - the ability to employ the material learned in class for personal needs, outside the ulpan - is the overriding objective of the ulpan. Application goes beyond the structured and graduated curriculum, and is tailored to students' immediate needs.

D. Study Frameworks

A. Primary Absorption Ulpan (Primary Ulpan)

The primary ulpan provides basic familiarity with Hebrew and is designed for beginners and those with minimal knowledge of the language.

Length of the course: five months; about 500 hours; 25-28 hours per week.

At the primary ulpan, the new immigrant studies the language required to function in daily life, masters the fundamental concepts of Judaism, and learns about the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. The ulpan makes the immigrant's absorption less difficult and thus serves as a focus of absorption. There are ulpanim in almost every city and town where there are new immigrants. There are also absorption centers where new immigrants reside.

This system is jointly operated by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the Ministry of Absorption and/or the local municipality, and sometimes the Jewish Agency as well.

Ulpanim for special groups have been established in different places in Israel, within the framework of primary absorption ulpanim:

1. Ulpanim for the elderly ("golden" ulpanim)

2. Ulpanim for the hard of hearing and the deaf

3. Ulpanim for the blind

4. Ulpanim for the mentally handicapped

These ulpanim are a joint project of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Adult Education Division and the Ministry of Absorption.

B. Ulpanim on Kibbutzim

1. "First Home in the Homeland": These ulpanim take place on kibbutzim and are designed for new immigrant families who have chosen the kibbutz as their "First Home in the Homeland."

   Length of the course: five months; about 500 hours; 25 hours per week.

   The curriculum is similar to that in the primary absorption ulpanim. This is a joint program of the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the Kibbutz Movement, and the Ministry of Absorption, and the Jewish Agency.

2. "Kibbutz Work Ulpan": These ulpanim are designed for new immigrants whose families live abroad, who have decided to try kibbutz life, for tourists.

   Length of the course: five months; about 500 hours.

   The curriculum here differs from that of the ulpan. The students study half a day and work half a day. This is a joint program of the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the Kibbutz Movement, the Jewish Agency, and the Ministry of Absorption.

C. Advanced Ulpanim

These ulpanim were established for graduates of the primary absorption ulpan who work in the mornings or are looking for a job, and still need to improve their Hebrew.

The students in these ulpanim improve their language skills and learn more about Judaism, the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

Length of the course: five months; eight hours per week, in the afternoon.

This system runs jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division and the Jewish Agency or the Ministry of Absorption.

The "Yerach" (literally: "month") ulpan is a month-long advanced ulpan designed for new immigrants and veteran Israelis who need to improve their knowledge of the Hebrew language. The students can either board at the school or commute. "Yerach" frameworks are found in Jerusalem, Haifa, and at Ulpan Akiva in Netanya.

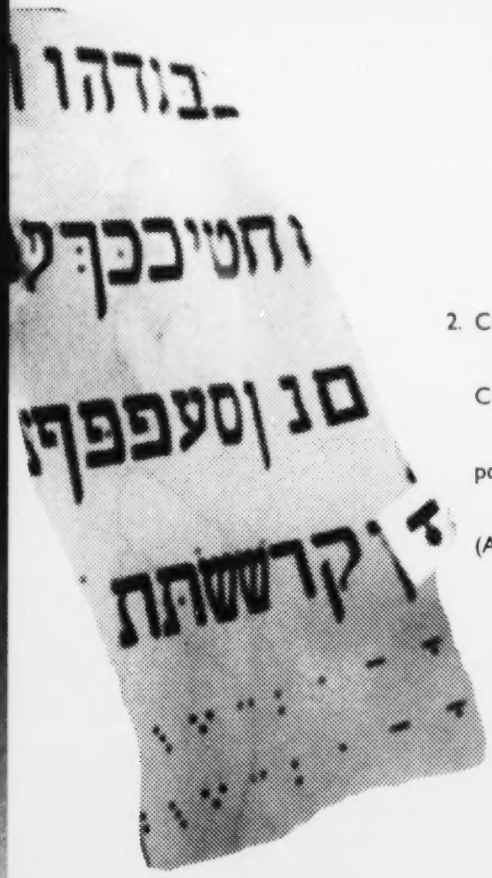
Ulpan Akiva in Netanya deserves special mention. This institution invests tremendous effort in a wide range of socio-cultural programs, which bring together Jews from Israel with their counterparts in the Diaspora, and Jews with Arabs and Druze.

D. "Ulpaniot" (Shorter Ulpanim)

The "ulpanit" is designed for new immigrants who are interested in studying Hebrew in the afternoon hours and veteran Israelis who want to improve or enhance their knowledge of Hebrew. This is a joint program of the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the local authorities, and/or other public organizations.

E. Ulpanim for Specific Purposes

1. Ulpan for Civil Servants: This framework is aimed at civil servants - both new immigrants and veteran Israelis - who need to improve their knowledge of Hebrew in order to function better at work. Participation in the course (in three stages) and passing the examinations gives participants the right to professional advancement. This framework uses a special curriculum. This program is operated jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the local authorities, and the Civil Service Commission. There are ulpanim for civil servants in Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and Beersheva.



2. Centers for Study and Employment Counselling: The objectives of this post-ulpan framework are:

(A) To improve ulpan graduates' ability to enter the work force successfully. The immigrants enhance their ability to communicate in Hebrew, master the appropriate professional vocabulary (in each professional field), and participate in a workshop on seeking employment.

(B) To prepare new immigrant physicians for the in-service training course (offered by the Ministry of Health) by teaching them the appropriate professional terminology in Hebrew.

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(C) To provide in-service training programs for new immigrant teachers and to prepare them for the examinations for a permanent teaching license, held by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

(D) To teach the language skills the new immigrants require to attend professional training courses, including those for childcare-personnel and bookkeepers. These courses last approximately 300 hours. These programs are running jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division and the Ministry of Absorption - Employment Department. There are study and professional counselling centers in Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Kfar Saba and Beersheva.

3. Center for Retraining College-educated Immigrants: This framework is designed for university or college graduates who have completed the primary ulpan and now require in-service training and refresher courses in their professions or professional retraining.

The center offers refresher courses for engineers and retraining programs in computer programming, library science, office skills, and other fields.

The studies last approximately 100 hours.

This framework is run jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Unit for Professional Retraining, and the Ministry of Absorption - Employment Department.

These centers are located in the Tel-Aviv area (Ramat Gan), Jerusalem, and Beersheva.

4. Conversion Ulpanim: These ulpanim are designed for ulpan graduates who want to convert to Judaism.

There are two types of conversion ulpanim: (A) A non-residential ulpan in Ramat Gan; (B) Residential ulpanim on the religious kibbutzim.

The conversion ulpanim teach Hebrew and Judaic studies (in Hebrew and the students' mother tongues).

This program is jointly run by the Jewish Agency, a public committee (including a representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs), and the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division.

F. "Sarel"

"Sarel" is a work ulpan for young people without families, who are employed in army camps. The participants receive room and board and transportation to their places of employment. They work half a day and study in the ulpan half a day.

This program is jointly run by the IDF, the Jewish Agency, and the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division.

G. Industrial Ulpanim

These ulpanim operate in factories, hospitals and other institutions where new immigrants are employed. Today there are several industrial ulpanim classes; in the near future an additional class will be opened within the framework of the advanced ulpanim.

The studies last some 200 hours; the days and times of the studies are tailored to the needs of each specific place.

This system is jointly run by the Ministry of Education and Culture - Adult Education Division, the Ministry of Absorption, and/or the Jewish Agency.

E. Referrals to Various Educational Frameworks

A. Referral to primary ulpanim (all frameworks) can be obtained from the Ministry of Absorption.

B. Referral to "First Home in the Homeland" can be obtained from the Ministry of Absorption through the Kibbutz Movement.

C. Referral to the kibbutz work ulpan and to "Sarel" can be obtained from the Jewish Agency and from the Kibbutz Movement.

D. Referral to advanced ulpanim can be obtained from the Jewish Agency or the Ministry of Absorption.

E. Referral to the shorter ulpanim ("ulpaniot") can be obtained from the local authorities or municipalities.

F. Referral to the ulpan for civil servants can be obtained from the Civil Service Commission through the local authorities.

G. No referral is necessary for the study and employment counselling centers. Ulpan graduates who have not found employment and were not sent to a refresher or retraining course will be referred - if they hold a

new immigrant's certificate and a diploma from the primary ulpan - to the study center near their home. The admissions committees meet once a week.

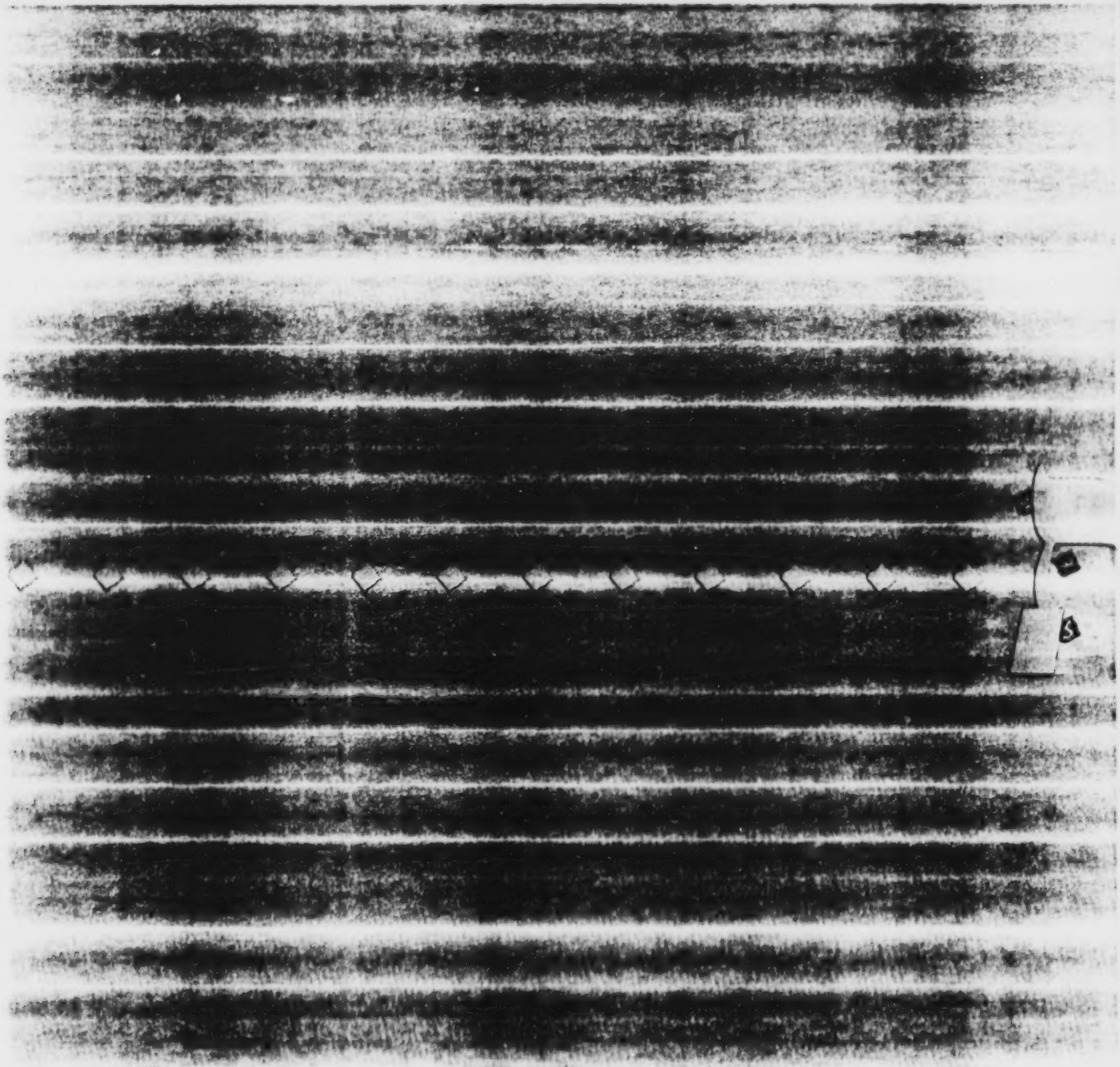
H. Referral to the Center for Retraining College-educated Immigrants can be obtained from the employment advisor at the Center for the Employment of College Graduates of the Employment Service (Ministry of Labor).

I. Referral to the conversion ulpanim can be obtained from the Jewish Agency.

J. Referral to industrial ulpanim can be obtained from the Ministry of Absorption.

The student population in each of these educational frameworks is composed of new immigrants (the majority), veteran Israelis, tourists, and non-Jews, aged 18 and up.

The Division of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the pedagogical supervision of each framework. The Division is also involved in preparing educational materials for teachers and students, teacher training, in-service training for teachers, and the like.



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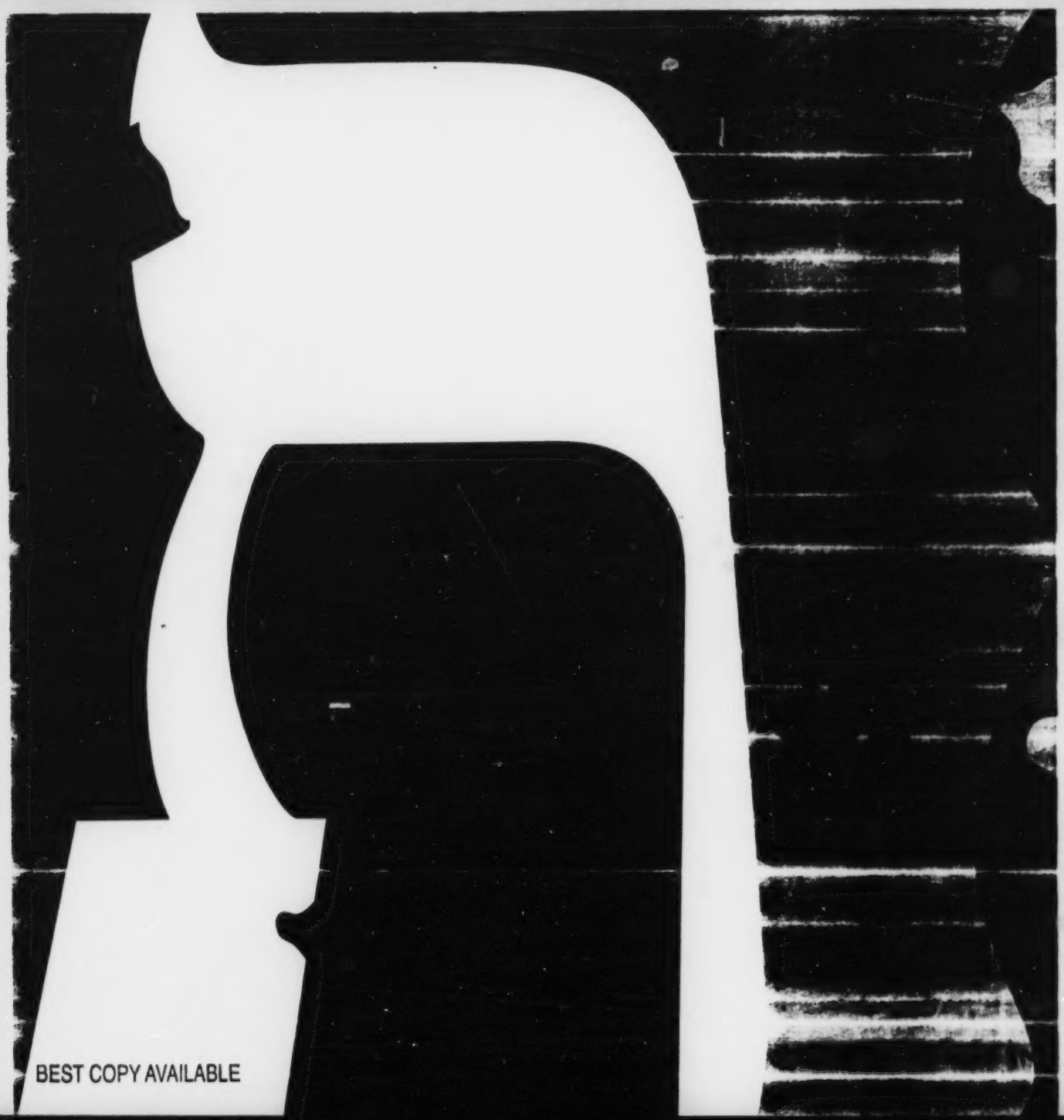

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